

Message Text

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SUBJECT: POSSIBLE VOLCANIC ERUPTION

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INFO RUDISDF/AMEMB REYKJAVIK ICELAND

RUCBSAA/CINCLANTFLT NORFOLK VA

UNCLAS

POSSIBLE VOLCANIC ERUPTION

1. GUDJON PETERSON, DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF CIVIL DEFENSE FOR ICELAND, HAS CONTACTED THIS HEADQUARTERS CONCERNING THE POSSIBLE ERUPTION OF VOLCANO "KATLA" LOCATED NEAR VIK APPROXIMATELY 90NM EAST/ SOUTHEAST OF KEFLAVIK. THERE HAS BEEN INCREASED EARTHQUAKE ACT- IVITY IN THE AREA SINCE SEPTEMBER WHICH NOW AVERAGE OVER 30 TREMORS PER DAY WITH A MEASURED INCREASE IN INTENSITY.

2. THE VOLCANO "KATLA" HAS A HISTORY OF ERUPTING ABOUT EVERY FORTY EIGHT YEARS, AND LAST ERUPTED IN 1918, 55 YEARS AGO. THE RESULTS OF SEISMIC MEASUREMENTS BEING TAKEN NOW IN THE AREA ARE VERY SIMILAR TO THOSE OBTAINED ON HEIMAY A FEW DAYS BEFORE THE ERUPTION THERE.

3. THE PRIMARYSDANGER IN THE AREA IS FROM FLOODING, SHOULD "KATLA"

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ERUPT. HISTORICALLY THE ERUPTION HAS MELTED A LARGE PORTION OF THE

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GLACIER TO CAUSE CONSIDERABLE DAMAGE TO THE AREA. IT IS ESTIMATED THAT THE CRATER IS COVERED BY ICE 400 METERS THICK.

4. SINCE THE ICELANDIC COAST GUARD HAS ONLY ONE HELICOPTER OF SUFFICIENT SIZE AND CAPACITY TO PERFORM ANY RELIEF ACTIVITIES, IT IS ANTICIPATED THAT ASSISTANCE WOULD BE REQUIRED FROM THE DEFENSE FORCE. ICELANDIC SCIENTISTS WHICH ARE ADVISING THE CIVIL DEFENSE ORGANIZATION BELIEVE THEY CAN PROVIDE A SIX HOUR WARNING OF THE ERUPTION. IT IS ESTIMATED THAT 200 PEOPLE LIVE IN THE TARGET AREA EAST OF "KATLA". SHOULD THE FLOW OF THE ERUPTION BE TO THE WEST OR IN BOTH DIRECTIONS, THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE AFFECTED WILL INCREASE SIGNIFICANTLY.

5. DEFENSE FORCE ASSISTANCE IS NOT ANTICIPATED BEYOND 48-72 HOURS UNLESS ROADS ARE CUT TO THE EXTENT THAT VITAL SUPPLIES MUST BE AIR-LIFTED INTO THE AREA. "KATLA" ERUPTIONS ARE HISTORICALLY SHORT LIVED LASTING THREE TO FOUR WEEKS.
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